

# Home Visit Environmental Assessment Recommendations

## Section A

### **Dust**

#### **HOUSE DUST/ DUST MITE**

Dust mite are the cause of allergies in house dust. Dust mites are microscopic, spider-like insects, which live in beds, carpets, and upholstered furniture/ curtains. They grow in warm, moist environments, like the bedroom. Their diet consists of shed human skin. The waste droppings from mites, is what causes allergic reaction in some people.

- 1 ☐ Keep house clean and dust-free: damp mop regularly, dust with damp cloth (with water or Endust)
- 2 ☐ Avoid “dust-collectors” (e.g. knick-knacks, do not store things under bed, store items in containers or cabinets to reduce dust collection)
- 3 ☐ Vacuum carpets weekly, if cannot be removed
- 4 ☐ Change vacuum bag often
- 5 ☐ Use “multi-layer” allergy vacuum bags. Use a HEPA exhaust filter over the vacuum air, outlet if possible
- 6 ☐ Avoid using water filtered vacuum cleaners, dust mite and cat allergens stay in the air for hours on tiny water droplets.
- 7 ☐ Miele, Nil fisk, and Kirby vacuum cleaners are better at trapping the allergens collected during vacuuming.

## Section B

### **Bedding**

- 1 ☐ Cover mattress, box spring, pillows in mite-proof encasing
- 2 ☐ Raise mattress off floor
- 3 ☐ Wash bedding (sheets, blankets) in hot water (at least 130 degrees) and dry in hot dryer, not outside, every 1-2 weeks
- 4 ☐ Do not use sheepskin pads, foam mattress toppers, or wool blankets.

## Section C

### **Carpeting/Scatter Rugs**

- 1 ☐ Remove carpets from bedroom if possible.
- 2 ☐ Steam clean carpets 1x a year during times when humidity is low. Often Steam cleaning carpets increase the growth of mites & molds, instead of reducing.
- 3 ☐ Vacuum area rugs both sides and wash rugs regularly.

## Section D

### **Curtains/Upholstered Furniture**

- 1 ☐ If possible remove upholstered furniture from bedroom, vinyl or leather furniture does not collect dust mites.
- 2 ☐ Use roll-up shades instead of heavy curtains; do not use horizontal mini-blinds, which collect dust. Wash curtains/drapes every 1-2 months in hot water and dry at high temp.
- 3 ☐ Vacuum upholstered furniture weekly.
- 4 ☐ Avoid bookcases or use covered bookshelves in bedroom.

## Section E

### **Stuffed toy/clothing/fabric throws**

- 1 ☐ Stuffed toys should be washed weekly in hot water and dried in a dryer at a high temp. Placing them in a freezer for 1-2 days every 2 weeks may reduce mite growth.
- 2 ☐ Remove/ reduce stuffed toys from child's sleeping area, store stuffed animals in closed toy box.
- 3 ☐ Store clothes in zippered plastic bags. Keep closet doors shut.
- 4 ☐ Remove unnecessary fabric/ throws from bedroom.

## Section F

### **Indoor Humidity & Air Filters**

- 1 ☐ Maintain household humidity between 40%-50% to reduce the growth of mites and molds. Use a hygrometer (humidity gauge) to check humidity levels in the home.
- 2 ☐ Filters on heating vents, air conditioners, furnace units may help keep the air clean. Permanent filters should be washed every 1-2 months and disposable filters should be changed every 2-3 months.
- 3 ☐ Consider a dehumidifier if necessary to keep humidity levels below 50%.
- 4 ☐ Do not use humidifier
- 5 ☐ Do not use evaporative (swamp) coolers or humidifiers.
- 6 ☐ Remove as many indoor plants as possible from home. Plants increase humidity and encourage the growth of molds. Do not put plants near heating or air conditioner vents

# Section G

## **MOLD SPORES/MILDEW**

Dark, damp, poorly ventilated areas encourage mold. Can be found indoors and outdoors, and grow best during rainy season. Mold can often be found in damp basement, in bathrooms, plants, clay pots with mildew; discolored/ stained ceiling wall, leaky pipes/faucets.

- 1☐ Clean mold with mild bleach solution (mix 3 tbl of bleach per qt of water), wear mask, protect hands, eyes and increase ventilation when using cleaning solution. Also, available ("Tilex", "Clorox", "X-14") trisodium phosphate (available in hardware stores), or other anti mold agents.
- 2☐ In bathroom, wash shower curtain weekly. Use a squeegee or dry cloth to wipe wet shower or tub walls after use.
- 3☐ Wash bathroom rugs weekly in hot water. Do not carpet the bathroom, it traps moisture.
- 4☐ Always use exhaust fans in bathroom and kitchen.
- 5☐ Allow ventilation and sunlight
- 6☐ Remove as many indoor plants and aquarium from home. Plants increase humidity and encourage the growth of molds.
- 7☐ Do not keep in bedroom.
- 8☐ Avoid wicker plant containers.
- 9☐ Do not put plants near heating or air conditioning vents.
- 10☐ Do not use dried flowers as a decorative item in the home.
- 11☐ Do not store firewood in the house
- 12☐ Allow air to circulate around inside the walls of closets. If mold problem in closet, consider 100 watt, light bulb running 24 hours/day until mold is gone.
- 13☐ Dry shoes and clothes thoroughly before storing in closets.

# Section H

## **COCKROACHE ALLERGY**

An allergy to cockroaches can cause asthma. Cockroaches breed in kitchens, bathrooms or in basements near heating systems.

- 1☐ Clean kitchen after cooking, wash dirty dishes immediately.
- 2☐ Clean cabinets regularly
- 3☐ Get rid of old newspaper, grocery bags, boxes, bottles, and cans.
- 4☐ Don't let water drip or puddle inside your house. Water attracts cockroaches.
- 5☐ Seal cracks/openings that allow pests to get inside.
- 6☐ Don't leave food out. Keep food stored in tightly sealed containers or plastic bags with twist ties
- 7☐ Put all garbage in sealed plastic trash bags. All garbage should have tightly fitting lids
- 8☐ Wet-mop hard surface floors weekly
- 9☐ Have home exterminated if possible, but stay away from house while sprayed and for several hours afterwards.

# Section I

## **ANIMAL DANDER/HAIR/FUR/FEATHERS**

(Pets, dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, etc.)

Danders are tiny scales that fall from the hair feathers, and skin of all warm-blooded animals. Cats tend to be more allergenic than dogs for most allergic people. Keeping the pet outside (in the garage or yard) may not be enough. Animal dander is very “sticky” and can cling to clothing, furniture, walls, etc. It takes at least 6 months for the dander to be removed from a home after the pet is gone. When moving into a house where an animal has lived, clean the ducts & furnace, washing the walls and removing the carpets and furniture.

- 1 ☐ Find a new home for pet, especially keep out of bedroom at all times.
- 2 ☐ Close the vent to the child’s sleeping area
- 3 ☐ Avoid contact, wash hands after petting
- 4 ☐ Bathe the pet every two weeks in warm water for 10 minutes. Washing animals may decrease the amount of allergen in home
- 5 ☐ Avoid feathers in the bedroom; if not possible, cover feather pillows, comforters and beds with mite-proof encasing
- 6 ☐ Carpet treatments with 3% tannic acid can be used every 2 months to help reduce the cat allergen in the carpet (this may stain light-colored carpets). Steam cleaning carpets does not remove the cat allergen and increases the growth of mites and molds.

# Section J

## **AIR/OTHER IRRITANTS**

Smoking, smoke from wood stoves, Odors & Sprays (perfumes, cooking, hair spray, cleaning agents, spray paint).

- 1 ☐ Consider stop smoking
- 2 ☐ Don’t allow smoking in home or car, especially child’s bedroom.
- 3 ☐ Sit in non-smoking areas in restaurants, waiting rooms, trains, etc.
- 4 ☐ Avoid wood stoves or wood burning fireplaces
- 5 ☐ void kerosene heaters

# Section K

## **OUTSIDE**

Pollen- non-flowering trees, grasses and weeds are the source of pollen allergies.

Smog

Temperature Change/Weather

- 1 ☐ Keep bedroom windows closed in the early morning & afternoon. Pollens are released from 7am- 3pm
- 2 ☐ Avoid being outside on windy days or during the time of day when pollen counts are highest (early morning hours)
- 3 ☐ Keep car windows closed; use air conditioning if possible
- 4 ☐ Change clothes and shower after outdoor activities in pollen
- 5 ☐ Stay inside
- 6 ☐ Avoid extreme cold weather, cover mouth with a scarf

# Section L

## **OTHER**

Colds, infections, exercise

- 1 ☐ Yearly flu shot
- 2 ☐ Use inhaler before exercising
- 3 ☐ Do not exercise outdoors when air pollution levels are high or in cold weather
- 4 ☐ Warm up and cool down

## **ACTION PLAN SUMMARY**

To improve the health of my/our home, I will take these three actions in the next six weeks:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Patient/Care-giver/Guardian